

Midwest Folklore

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Midwest Folklore

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A FINNISH SCHWANK PATTERN: THE FARMER-SERVANT CYCLE OF THE KUUSISTO FAMILY*

INTRODUCTION

THE FOLLOWING discussion is based on a part of the collection that I made while interviewing one family. From a more general collection every item told about farmers and their servants was extracted. I am convinced that I did not exhaust the repertoire of any of the three generations of storytellers in the Kuusisto family, and yet I believe that the cycle in question proves its point: one of the phenomena in the life of tradition is the loss of certain genres; and in the following, we will observe such a loss. The group of *schwänke* that I have called here the farmer-servant cycle, disappears entirely, when we turn from the first to the second generation of this Finnish American family. This happens notwithstanding the fact

that these stories are simple, clear, and clever. We will see that they form a unit, a fact which could work for their preservation; we will see that the point in each *schwank* is well-carried. The only thing that prevents the cycle from being handed on is that it has no meaning to the American-born generation of the family; we are again reminded of the fact that folklore lives by force of its function.

THE TRADITION OF THE KUUSISTO FAMILY

During the months of June, July, and August, 1960, and December, 1960, I met and interviewed ten members of the family. These people lived in three states—Minnesota, Oregon, and Illinois—and belonged to three distinct generations. The following table gives their names and ages, their relationships with Mr. William Kuusisto (who came to the U.S. as the first, in 1900, and is the oldest member of the family); F indicates that the person was born in Finland, A, in the United States; a stands for active, p for passive carrier of tradition.

I generation:

1. Mr. William K., 81, Fa	3. Mrs. Hilma K., 75, wife, Fp
2. Mr. Tuomas K., 68 brother,	4. Mrs. Maria K., 68, brother's Fa

II generation:

5. The Rev. U. Thomas K., 38, son, Aa	8. Mrs. Helen K., 38, daughter-in-law, Ap
6. The Rev. Wayne V.K., 44, son	9. Mrs. Mary K., 28, daughter-in-law, Ap
7. Mr. Sulo K., ca. 40, son, Ap	

III generation:

10. David K., 15, grandson, Aa

The question of who is to be considered an active and who a passive carrier of tradition is here solved partly on the basis of the opinions expressed by the family; everyone referred to Mr. William Kuusisto as a good story-teller, and nobody believed the Reverend Mr. Wayne V. Kuusisto would tell jokes. Further, Mrs. Hilma Kuusisto knew her husband's repertoire thoroughly but was reluctant to tell any, insisting that her husband did "remember better." Mr. William Kuusisto repeatedly mentioned his deceased brother, the Reverend Mr. Viktori Kuusisto, as an outstanding story teller, especially as to the *schwänke* about pastors—a cycle which was

prevalent in the family, for obvious reasons, since two of the brothers were and two of the sons are ministers by profession. Mr. William Kuusisto also introduced me to his brother Tuomas, a good informant, yet not referred to as one by the rest of the family. Here the explanation might be the fact that the first generation lived in De Kalb, Illinois, and thus were daily in touch with each other, but U. Thomas, Helen, and David lived in Virginia, Minnesota, and Wayne V. and Mary in Astoria, Oregon and hence were more likely to forget their uncle's tradition and referred only to the father.

The division of roles (active vs. passive) was also supported by opinions given by people outside the family circle, e.g., the congregations for whom the Kuusistos are the ministers. Finally, it corresponds well with my experiences in collecting: the bulk of the collection was told by William and Thomas K., and U. Thomas K. They displayed willingness to tell tales, and all of them showed a tendency to tell *schwänke* in cycles.

The tradition of the Kuusisto family, as I collected it, consists of the following groups of tales:

The farmer-servant cycle told by the first generation,

The *savolainen* cycle, told by the first and the second generations,

Schwänke about pastors and their congregations, told by the first, the second, and the third generations,

Dialect stories, told by the second generation.

The collecting was done in the homes of the informants, in Virginia, Minnesota (June 15, 1960), and De Kalb, Illinois (December 29 and 30, 1960), and the interview yielded about two hours of tape, sixty-nine items, plus some proverbs not on tape. It should also be mentioned that all members of the family, whether "active" or "passive" were very helpful to the collector in many ways: they contacted possible informants in their communities, invited the collector to their homes, and so forth. With the exception of Mr. Sulo Kuusisto whose opinion, addressed to his father, was "Don't you ever hear any new stories?" the entire family showed appreciation of *schwänke*.

SCHWANKE ABOUT FARMERS AND SERVANTS

The first generation of the Kuusistos, the Finnish-born brothers William and Tuomas, and William's wife Hilma told a cycle of *schwänke* about farmers and servants. It is noticeable that the cycle is entirely lacking in the repertoire of U. Thomas Kuusisto and his

son David, both born in the United States and without any experience of the social situation that is the background of these *schwänke*. On the other hand, for the first generation this was the normal situation before their departure for the United States: they themselves and their fathers worked for farmers. The setting is also mentioned by Mrs. Hilma Kuusisto when she starts telling her story: "When he [her father] was there in the farmhouse working, and they were eating breakfast. . . ."

The tales in the farmer-servant cycle are very uniform. First of all, every story is based on the contrast between the "owning class" and the "working class," and, without exception, the sympathy is on the side of the workers. That means, clearly, that these stories have always been told by servants, since their obvious tendency can only have been supported by the workers. The social protest is, however, not bitter: the point is made in a rather tactful way.

In the following analysis, I will refer to the items using the numbers they have in my collection (e.g., 54.39 means tape number 54, item number 39). The cycle consists of eight *Schwänke*, with two additional variants. The items correspond with the Aarne-Thompson types in the following way:

Type 1560	Köngäs 54.39
1561	54.11 and 54.41
1565††	54.34
1567†	54.14
1568†	54.12 and 54.40
No type number	54.38
	54.35
	54.13

The items 54.38 and 54.35 should be in the Type-Index; we will be able to observe the same structure in them as that of the "types" in the cycle. The story which I mention as the last one in my list is told by Mrs. Kuusisto, who did not consider herself a story-teller; and the item is not a clear story. Its meaning is, however, the same as that of all the other stories of the farmer-servant cycle; thus I include it here, since it throws some light on the origin of these *schwänke*. It is the only one which is told as an actual experience, namely as an incident observed by Mrs. Kuusisto's father; it is a *schwank* in the making.

I distinguish the following traits in the cycle:

opening formula
 setting
 characters
 problem
 quasi solution
 final solution
 message
 ending formula

1. *Opening Formula.* Mr. William Kuusisto had the habit of using an opening formula. Every item told by him contains it, and it is always the same: *kerran* (once). The formula is not used regularly by the two other informants, Mr. Tuomas Kuusisto and Mrs. Hilma Kuusisto. That this opening is not incidental in the storytelling manner of William Kuusisto, is shown in 54.14 which Hilma Kuusisto first started telling, but then gave up. Mr. Kuusisto continued, and I asked him to start from the beginning. William Kuusisto: "Once in Finland men went to the woods. . . ."

The opening formula *kerran*, once, is used by Tuomas Kuusisto in one variant (54.39). Another item told by him starts: "There was a farmer. . . ." (54.35).

As a whole, the opening *once* seems regular in the Reverend U. Thomas Kuusisto's storytelling, too; it appears in his *schwänke*, but this cycle, as stated above, did not belong to his repertoire.

2. *Setting.* The narrative begins with the characters eating in seven instances:

"Well, once a farmer and his servant were starting their meal, as the neighbors were eating, too." (54.39)

"Once a farmer and his servant were eating breakfast. . . ." (54.11)

"Yes, they were eating breakfast." (54.41)

[Eating presupposed.] ". . . as they didn't have butter. . . ." (54.14)

"Once [a farmer and his wife—] a farmer and his servant were eating breakfast." (54.12)

"Well, a farmer and his servant were at the dinner table. . . ." (54.40)

"When he was there in the farmhouse working, and they were eating breakfast. . . ." (54.13)

The story then develops in two ways: (a) eating situation brings the problem and its solution, or (b) eating situation is contrasted with working situation.

3. *Characters.* The characters of these *schwänke* are invariably a farmer and his servant(s). In two items, a third "character" is needed: the neighbors who act as the public for whom the action is played (54.39 and 54.38). Without the public, both of the items would lose their points.

One thing is of importance here: the characters are totally impersonal. In no items are the names of the persons mentioned: both the farmer and the servant represent a social class, the employer and the worker in the rural environment.

4. *Problem.* The problem is always implicit, never spelled out. In five items, the problem is clearly moral: the farmer tries to cheat his servant, but the servant makes the situation even. In three cases, the farmer pretends something or lies about something and asks the servant to do the same:

"So the farmer said that 'Let's pretend eating, but not eat!'"
(54.39)

"So the farmer made the servant say that it is a salmon; 'And if you don't say so, you can leave the farm.' Since it was winter and the hired hand hardly needed." (54.34)

"...then the farmer shouted to his servant: 'Bring the drink flagon here' [concealing the fact that the drink was only water]
(54.38)

In one item, the farmer tries to make his servant eat two meals at one time, to save food (54.11 and 54.41 which are variants of the same *schwank* type 1561). In one *schwank* (type 1568†), he tries to get the good piece of meat without the servant noticing it (54.12 and 54.40).

In two of the *schwänke*, the problem is practical: the servants' food is unsatisfactory (54.14, 54.13). In 54.35, the farmer's problem is how to find a good worker, and the worker's problem, how to be a good one without doing anything. This is the only item in which the servant's morals are blameworthy; but at least he is clever, as he is in all ten items.

5. *Quasi Solution.* The quasi solution is always offered by the farmer, who at this point is getting the upper hand. The quasi solutions are:

to pretend eating, but not eat (54.39)

to eat two meals at the same time (54.11 and 54.41)

to turn the servant's attention from the meat to the plate
(54.12 and 54.40)

- to blame the servants for putting a herring on the road (54.14)
- to call a little fish a salmon (54.34)
- to call water, drink (54.38)

6. *Final Solution.* The final solution, offered by the servant, is always symmetrical with the quasi solution; it is its exact opposite and turns the farmer's trick on himself. The final solutions are:

- to pretend mowing, but not mow (54.39)
- to eat all meals of the day at the same time and then go to bed (54.11 and 54.41)
- to pretend innocence of the fact that the object of the discussion is the meat, not the plate (54.12 and 54.40)
- to tell that the herring is on the road to bring butter which belongs also to the servant's meal (54.14)
- to call a cat a bear (54.34)
- to say that there is no real drink, only water (54.38)

7. *Message.* Like the problem, the message is always clear, but never stated directly. The farmer has no right to be unjust: if he lies, the answer is lying back; if he cheats, the servant may cheat him. This is especially clear in the items in which the problem stays on a moral level. The higher social position does not bring to the employer any right of using another set of morals than what is required from his servant.

There is another, practical problem: the servants must be given enough to eat, "the laborer deserves his food." If it is not given, the clever servant finds his way of remarking on the shortcoming.

The sympathy is invariably on the side of the servant. He is the cheated one, he is the honest one who is made to lie against his will, and he is the clever one who brings justice to the situation. In one item, he is so cunning that he lies without lying: he describes his way of working and arranges such a situation that he can keep his promise literally, but not in practice (54.35).

8. *Ending Formula.* Ending formulas are not so clearly present as opening formulas were. Again, they appear in Mr. William Kuusisto's telling, once in Mrs. Kuusisto's. They are the following:

That's how it is (54.41).

Well, that was that (54.38).

That was how it was (54.14) (said by Mrs. Kuusisto who had participated in telling the story).

These endings are a little defensive. I have a strong feeling that they are not used when it is assumed that the listener knows the

item. They are, perhaps, added for the collector, as if to indicate: here the story ends, don't expect anything more.

Conclusion. I mentioned the fact earlier that the second and the third generations of the Kuusistos do not tell the farmer-servant cycle at all. Yet, it is prevalent in the tradition of the first generation: the cycle was started before I asked for it specifically.

We must consider the function of the cycle the factor which keeps it alive. Although the cycle is humorous and has certainly been told for amusement, this is not the whole explanation. This is humor with tendencies, humor which takes sides. To be able to identify himself with the hero of these *schwänke*, the storyteller must have experienced at least something of the social situation which is the background of the cycle; he must have some feeling for the servant's lot, for the ever-actual, ever-present problem of the balance between working and being properly fed and treated. In miniature forms, this cycle describes episodes of class struggle.

Yet I would hesitate to call these items "stories of protest." They are too mild and too humorous. One can imagine that they were told not only among servants who by telling these *schwänke* took their compensation, but also, perhaps, in the setting which they describe: as a kind of didactic stories, suitable to be told also to the employers, so as to remind them of the importance of being just. In Mrs. Kuusisto's words: "But the farmer well understood him; they didn't speak more about it; it was left so."

THE VARIANTS

Note: The texts are completely unedited, *i.e.*, not even false starts drawn back by the informants have been avoided. The items were told in a well-preserved Southern Ostrobothnian dialect, which is the native dialect of all three of the present informants, but also tends to become, to some extent, the standard American Finnish. The dialect forms cannot, of course, be shown in the translation; instead, the sentence structure, repetitions, and tenses of verbs have been translated as closely as possible. A trait especially worth noticing is the free variation between *oratio directa* and *oratio obliqua*; thus, direct speech starts with *jotta* (that), and oftentimes changes into indirect in the middle of a sentence. In my observation, this is rather characteristic of, at least, the Finnish oral storytelling style.

Because of printing difficulties, only one of the items can be given both in the original Finnish and in translation. The collection as a whole is on deposit in the Archives of Folk and Primitive Music, Maxwell Hall, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

1.

Köngäs 54.11. De Kalb, Ill., Dec. 29, 1960. Informant: Mr. William Kuusisto, born in Ylistaro, Finland, Feb. 24, 1879. Into the United States in 1900. The item is Type 1561, Motif W 111.2.6. The Type-Index, the Motif-Index, and Stith Thompson, The Folktale (New York, 1951), pp. 210-211, interpret this as a Schwank about the laziness of the servant; that is, however, not the point, at least not in this item. Additional variants: Lauri Simonsuuri, ed., Suomen kansan kaskuja [anecdotes of the Finnish people], (Helsinki, 1938), p. 70; Oskar Hackman, ed., Finlands svenska Folkdiktning I A 2, (Helsingfors, 1920), p. 232.

Kerran isäntä ja trenki söivät einestää, ja isäntä sanoo trengille,
jotta eikö syörä kohta niin palio, jotta ei tarvitse tulla pualiselle.



Mr. William Kuusisto
born in Ylistaro, Finland
Feb. 24, 1879
Came to the United States in 1900
Has lived in DeKalb, Ill. for 60 years

Niin trenki oli
kovasti . . . "Joo,
syörää vain.
Mutta eikö se
olsi vielä paree",
sanoo trenki,
jotta niin
syötääs kohta
illallinenkin,
jottei tarvittisi
sitte huolehtia
koko päivänä."
No, isäntä oli
kovasti
mielihännsä
siitä ja no sitten
kun oli syöty,
niin trenki
kaahaasi
korkoosehen, ja
isäntä sanoo,
jotta: "Mitä
sä ny meinaat?"
trengillen, niin

trenki sanoo, jotta: "No, kun on illallinen kerran syöty, niin eikös se sitten mennä levolle?"

Elli Kaija Köngäs: Mikä on korkoo?

William Kuusisto: Korkoo on niinkun yli-, ylisänky. Korkoosehen.

Elli Kaija Köngäs: Tämän te olette kuullut varmaan Ylistarossa, vai?

William Kuusisto: Joo. Jaa.

Elli Kaija Köngäs: Yli kuusikymmentä vuotta sitten.

William Kuusisto: Joo. Jaa Yli kuusikymmentä vuotta varmasti, kun min oon tääl ollut.

Once a farmer and his servant were eating breakfast, and the farmer said to the servant that, "Couldn't we at once eat so much that we will not need to come back for lunch?" And the servant was much. . . "Well, let's eat. But wouldn't it be even better," the servant said, "if we eat supper at once, too, so that we won't need to worry during the whole day." Well, the farmer was very delighted with it, and then after they had eaten the servant jumped to bed (*kaahaasi korkoosehen*), and the farmer said that, "What do you mean now?" to the servant, and the servant said that, "Well, since we have eaten supper, shouldn't we go to bed?"

Elli Kaija Köngäs: What is *korkoo*?

William Kuusisto: Well, it is the upper, the upper bed. To the *korkoo*.

Elli Kaija Köngäs: This you have certainly heard in Ylistaro, or?

William Kuusisto: Well, yes.

Elli Kaija Köngäs: More than sixty years ago.

William Kuusisto: Well, yes. Indeed, I have been here more than sixty years.

2.

Köngäs 54.12. De Kalb, Ill. Dec. 29, 1960. Informant: Mr. William Kuusisto. Type 1568†. Köngäs 54.46, told by Mr. Alex Alajoki in Brooklyn, N.Y., February 12, 1961, and Köngäs 54.47, told by Mrs. Eine Alajoki in Brooklyn, N.Y., February 12, 1961. Köngäs 37.24 is another variant, told by Mr. Arthur Bergsten in Astoria, Oregon, August 18, 1960.

Once a farmer and his wife—a farmer and his servant were eating breakfast. And a piece of meat came to the side of the servant—they were eating beef stew—as the farmer's wife brought the plate to the table. So the farmer turned the plate around and said, "I paid twenty five pennies for this." Well, the servant turned it back and said that, "It was not too much." And the piece of meat was again on the side of the servant.

3.

Köngäs 54.13. De Kalb, Ill. Dec. 29, 1960. Informant: Mrs. Hilma Kuusisto, née Kujanpää, born in Jalasjärvi, Finland, July 25, 1885. Into the United States in 1906.

When I was a little girl, my father once told this story about a farmer and his servant. When he was there in the farm-house

working, and they were eating breakfast—as it was customary in Finland to cook potatoes already for breakfast. And then sauce was made of milk and a piece of butter was put to it. And then since everyone was sopping their potatoes in the sauce, they ran out of butter, and only the blue milk was left. Thus the servant looked through the window



Mrs. Hilma Kuusisto, née Kujanpää
born in Jalasjärvi, Finland
July 25, 1885
Came to the United States in 1906

and said that "Well, the sky is changing [*kalkastella*]," that what sort of weather would be coming. But he spoke so only because they ran out of butter in the sauce. But the farmer well understood him; they didn't speak more about it, it was left so.

4.

Köngäs 54.14. De Kalb, Ill., Dec. 29, 1960. Informants: Mrs. Hilma Kuusisto, Mr. William Kuusisto. Type 1567†. Additional variants: Lauri Simonsuuri, Suomen kansan kaskuja, p. 80.

Hilma Kuusisto: . . . I don't remember, they sent it to bring butter, and then the others said as the butter did not come and the



Mr. and Mrs. William Kuusisto
(For further information, see illustrations no. I and II, pp. 205, 207).

herrings were still there that, "Well, are you still there, and we have sent you to bring butter." But I do not remember how to tell it, [to her husband:] don't you remember better?

William Kuusisto: Well, I do not remember it quite. Well, they made feet for it and put it to the road.

And there was someone, was it the farmer, who arrived in the woods when they were working there, in the woods.

Elli Kaija Köngäs: Could you start from the beginning and tell who were in question.

Hilma Kuusisto [to her husband: You try to start it from the beginning.]

William Kuusisto: Once in Finland men went to the woods to work. And then, as they didn't have butter, they made feet for a herring and brought it to the road, the herring, and then the farmer came to the woods and said, "What . . ." That he saw a herring there on the road, what did it mean. So the servants said that, "Wasn't it farther than there?" That, "And we sent it to get butter, wasn't it farther than there?" [Laughs.]

Hilma Kuusisto: That was how it was.

5.

Köngäs 54.34. De Kalb, Ill., Dec. 30, 1960. Informant: Mr. Tuomas Kuusisto, born in Kivennapa, brought up in Ylistaro, Finland. Into the United States in 1911. Type 1565††, cf, Motif K 1509. Variants: Lauri Simonsuuri, Suomen kansan kaskuja, pp. 72-73.

Well, there were a farmer and his servant discussing the fish

that the farmer had caught, and the farmer claimed it was a salmon. And the servant said, "It is no salmon, only a little fish." So the farmer made the servant say that it is a salmon; "And if you don't say so, you can leave the farm." Since it was winter and a hired hand was hardly needed, well, the servant had to say that, "Well, it may be a little salmon." But he bore in mind to take revenge on the farmer on it.

In the summer, in the pressing hay making time, they were working on the field, and a cat went through a fence slit. So the servant said that, "Look, a bear went there to the woods." So the farmer said, "It was no bear, only a cat." The servant said that, "If you don't say it was a bear, I will leave the farm at once." Well, the farmer had to agree that, "Well, it may be such a little bear."

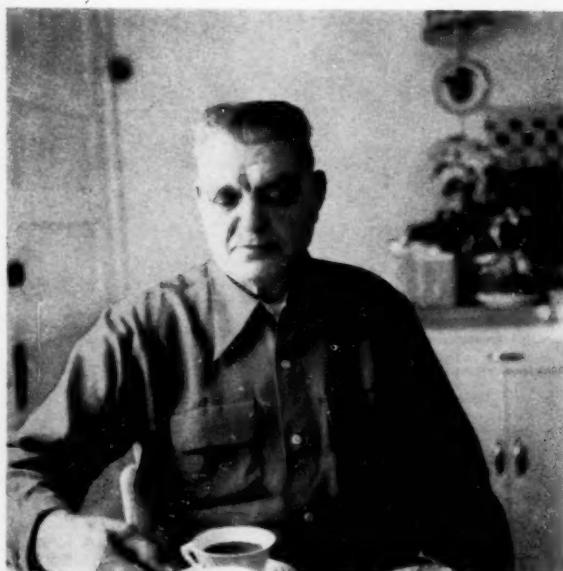
6.

Köngäs 54.35. De Kalb, Ill., Dec. 30, 1960. Informant: Mr. Tuomas Kuusisto.

There was a farmer who wanted to get a good servant. And he met a man who said he was so good in hoeing that he always

had three
hummocks in
the air and the
hoe tearing the
fourth one. Of
course the
farmer was
delighted and
took him
to servant.

And then in
the summer
when there was
the hoeing time,
the servant was
hoeing in the
field, and the
farmer wanted
to see how
good he was in
hoeing, whether
he was as good
as he had said.
When he went



Mr. Tuomas Kuusisto, brother of William
born in Kivennapa, brought up in Ylistaro
Birth date: Jan. 4, 1892.
Came to the United States in 1911

to the servant, the servant had three hummocks in the air, put on stakes, one higher than another. And the hoe was tearing the fourth one, and the servant was sitting on the edge of the ditch, and sleeping.

7.

Köngäs 54.38. *De Kalb, Ill.*, Dec. 30, 1960. *Informant: Mr. William Kuusisto. Variant: Lauri Simonsuuri, Suomen kansan kaskuja, p. 83.*

Once there were two houses, and their fields were next to each other, and then the farmer shouted to his servant: that,

"Bring the drink flagon here!"

So the servant shouted that, well,

"You mean this water flagon?"

The farmer said that,

"I mean the drink flagon!"

Well, the servant said that,

"Well, then it is the water flagon."

That was how the neighbors heard everything—they in the other house had it better, and thus they heard what kind of drink they have, only water in the flagons.

Elli Kaija Köngäs: What drink was customary, then?

William Kuusisto: Buttermilk. The other farmhouse had buttermilk. Well, that was that.

8.

Köngäs 54.39. *De Kalb, Ill.*, Dec. 30, 1960. *Informant: Mr. Tuomas Kuusisto. Type 1560, Motif J 1502. Stith Thompson, The Folktale, pp. 189-190. Variants: Köngäs 52.2, told by Mr. Andrew Huntus in Astoria, Oregon, September 2, 1960; Oskar Hackman, Finlands svenska Folkdiktning, I A 2, pp. 225-226, gives 5 variants.*

Well, once a farmer and his servant were starting their meal, as the neighbors were eating, too. So the farmer said that,

"Let's pretend eating, but not eat."

The servant contented himself with it, and then when they went to the field to mow, the servant took the blade off the scythe and said that, well,

"Now let's pretend mowing, but not mow."

Elli Kaija Köngäs: Was this told in Finland?

Tuomas Kuusisto: Yes, yes.

9.

Köngäs 54.40. De Kalb, Ill., Dec. 30, 1960. Informant: Tuomas Kuusisto. Type 1568†.

Well, a farmer and his servant were at the dinner table, and the farmer noticed that there was a good piece of meat on the servant's side, and he wanted to have it. Thus he turned the plate around and said,

"I paid twenty five pennies for this."

The servant noticed it, turned the plate back, and said,
"It wasn't really too much."

And the servant had the piece of meat again.

10.

Köngäs 54.41. De Kalb, Ill., Dec. 30, 1960. Informant: Mr. William Kuusisto (I tried to make Tuomas Kuusisto tell this Schwank, but as he was slow in starting, his brother told it). Type 1561.

Elli Kaija Köngäs: You just mentioned also another story about a farmer and his servant eating, that one in which all meals were eaten at once.

Tuomas Kuusisto: Were they eating breakfast, or?

William Kuusisto: Yes, they were eating breakfast. The farmer said that, "Let's eat the lunch, too, isn't it all right (*oo rait*)?" But the servant said, "Isn't it even better that we eat the supper, too?" The farmer was very delighted with it, yes. Well, as they had eaten the supper, the servant jumped to bed (*kaahaasi korkoosehen*), and the farmer said, "What do you mean now?" He said, "Well, since we have eaten supper, shoudn't we then go to bed?" That's how it is.

Tuomas Kuusisto: Now it is told already.

NOTE

* I want to express my gratitude to the Research Committee of Indiana University and the American Association of University Women for fellowships which made my field work possible.

1962 SUMMER FOLKLORE INSTITUTE

The Sixth Folklore Institute of America will be held at Indiana University from June 13 to August 10. Distinguished visiting folklorists include MacEdward Leach, President of the American Folklore Society; Archer Taylor, past president of the Modern Language Association; Toichi Mabuchi of Tokyo, Japan; and Robert Wildhaber of Basel, Switzerland.

Courses will be offered on European folklore and folk art, the folklore of southeast Asia; oral literature; the proverb and the riddle; and the traditional ballad.

Also there will be workshop courses on folklore archiving, the folk museum, and fieldwork. A certificate will be given to participants satisfactorily completing six or more credits. Courses carry regular credit in the Summer Session.

A summer meeting of the American Folklore Society will be held in conjunction with the Folklore Institute on July 27 and 28. Fellows of the Society will lead panel discussions. A forum on Folk Literature of Asia will be held June 21 as one session of the Third Conference on Oriental-Western Literary and Cultural Relations.

For applications write to Richard M. Dorson, Chairman, Folklore Program, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

BY RUTH YAKES MORTENSON
University of Pennsylvania
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A NOTE ON "ALISON AND WILLIE" (CHILD 256)

"He saw a hart draw near a hare,
An aye that hare drew near a toun,
An that same hart did get a hare
But the gentle knicht got neer a toun."

Stanza 7

ACCORDING TO CHILD (*The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, IV, pp. 416-17), Stanza 7 of "Alison and Willie" ". . . must be left to those who can interpret Thomas of Ercildoune's prophecies." A clue to the meaning of this stanza, then, may lie in the body of "apocryphal" material that has grown up around the Thomas of Ercildoune legend.

The prophecies, traditionally attributed to Thomas, contain only one reference to a hare:

"The hare sall kittle on my hearth stane
And there will never be a laird Learmont again."
EETS, *The Romance and Prophecies of
Thomas of Erceldoune*, p. xliv

But this prophecy, referring to the end of the Learmont family, clearly contributes nothing toward explicating Stanza 7 of "Alison and Willie."

It is in Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scotch Border*, v. IV, pp. 125-137, that we find "the traditional account of his [Thomas'] marvelous return to Fairy Land. . ." This "modern" part of the Thomas legend is, of course, Scott's own contribution to the legend. In Stanza XXVIII of his poem, the following occurs:

"Then forth they rushed: by Leader's tide
A selcouth sight they see
A hart and hind pace side by side. . ." (p. 133)

This strange event was interpreted by Thomas as a summons from the Fairy Queen:

"And there, before Lord Douglas' face
With them he crossed the tide. . ."

In the last stanza of this poem, we find that

". . . neer in haunts of living men
Again was Thomas seen."

Because of the lacuna in Stanza 9 of "Alison and Willie," we cannot be sure of Willie's fate. Did he die of "the pains of luv," or did he, upon seeing the hart and hare, follow them into the forest? It well might be that he did, for this incident and the Thomas story parallel one another except in one respect, the animals involved. Both disappearance stories contain a hart, but his companion in the Thomas episode was a hind, while his mate in the ballad was a hare. Wimberley, in *Folklore of the English and Scottish Ballads*, lists common "witch familiars" in the British Isles: "cats, hares, and occassionally red deer." (p. 58) Later, on p. 64, he states: "The hare is known throughout Europe as a witch familiar. . . and is a common character in myths and folktales." From these comments, it would seem that these two incidents are parallel ones, the ballad containing either a deliberate mixing of species, perhaps for effect, or a mis-interpretation or mis-reading of a traditional episode as found in the Thomas of Ercildoune story. Thus, I feel, we can now "unravel" Stanza 7 of "Alison and Willie." This ballad contains, like the Thomas legend, an association with the "fairy abduction" theme. The rather ambiguous last line of the ballad, "But the birds waur Willie's companie" would indicate some peculiar fate. "Alison and Willie," from Buchan's manuscript, of a later date than Scott's poem, would seem then, to have picked up, if not directly, at least within the same tradition, an account of a mortal lured away from the world of the living by witch or fairy folk in disguise.

BY EVELYN MONTGOMERY
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PROVERBIAL
MATERIALS IN
THE POLITICIAN
OUT-WITTED AND
OTHER COMEDIES OF
EARLY AMERICAN
DRAMA 1789-1829

THE POLITICIAN OUT-WITTED,¹ was first performed in 1789. As a secondary conflict in its plot, it has a bitter argument between Trueman, a schoolmaster, and Loveyet, a politician, as to which United States Constitution should be adopted. For its primary conflict it has the effort of young Charles Loveyet, recently returned from the West Indies, to marry his longtime sweetheart, Miss Harriet Trueman, despite the quarreling of their respective fathers.

Each of the characters is highly individualized. Trueman, orating in a most lordly and extremely incomprehensible fashion, manages to make utterly complicated that which should be immediately clear. Old Loveyet has delusions of grandeur and also

an aching desire to appear younger than he is. Worthnought is quite a ladies' man, wooing Harriet in supposedly fluent French and proving an unscrupulous cad. Charles and Frankton are any two young, handsome gentlemen. Harriet is a genteel young lady whose women friends prove to have vipers' tongues. Wandering in and out of the scenes is Humphry Cubb, handy-man about town, who says his family is the largest and the grandest in the countryside, for not only has he a second cousin who is in the "lagislatur" [sic] but also one who is a soup provider. Humphry, allegedly illiterate, is a loquacious source of proverbs, quotations from history, and delightful improvisation. He is by far the most interesting character in the play.

Comedy is introduced (1) through the ridiculous quarrels over the Constitution, which show us how heated the feeling was concerning its adoption at that time and also that the generation of '89 could laugh at itself; (2) through the metaphorical names of the characters: the serious-minded, high-principled teacher is Mr. True-man, the villain is a certain Mr. Worthnought, the old man wishing for a young bride is Mr. Loveyet, and the brash country boy is a Cubb; (3) through situations such as a trunk of money's being delivered to the wrong house, Humphry's attempt to get a barbershop shave, and Mr. Loveyet's thinking it is he, not his son, of whom Maria is enamored; (4) through many plays on words; and (5) through the intentional misuse of proverbial expression.

Forty-eight proverbs and proverbial expressions for which sources could be found were excerpted from the play. Also excerpted were eighteen expressions known to the writer but for which sources could not be found in any of the standard reference materials. Eight expressions also occurring in other plays of this period but no longer in use were excerpted as were also twenty-seven phrases of cant and colloquialism. In addition a number of phrases were discovered whose present meanings differ from those which they had in 1789. An example of this would be "in the pink" which we now use especially to show good health, *i.e.*, "in the pink of condition," "in the pink of health," but which was used in the comedies to signify the ultimate of anything: fashion, food or health.

Humphry Cubb, having assured us that "Father will bring his pigs to a fine market, as the old proverb goes," that "one good turn deserves another, as the old saying is," and that "evil be to them as evil thinks" for "while the grass grows the mare starves" glibly convinces us that "We can be sartin of nothing in this world, as Mr. Thumpton says."

After being reminded that "It's a wise son knows his own father" (proverbial since Ulysses returned from his *Odyssey*), and that everything is beautiful in its season" (as has been said since the sixteen hundreds), our ear is tricked into believing that "Common sense and propriety are never in season," although we find later that what La Rochefoucauld really said, in 1665, was "Men's virtues, like fruits, have their season."

With such expressions as "lade's man," "petticoat government," "they will cry if you look at them," "as petrified . . . as a frozen snake," and "emptiness in his upper region" interspersed through the dialogue, the play has moments of seeming to be a product of the middle twentieth century.

A particularly interesting phrase is Humphry's cry to Dolly that, "I want to buss you." Inquiry shows this expression in the late sixteen hundreds to have meant simply "kiss," at the time of the play in 1789 to have had a vulgar connotation, and now in the middle twentieth century to have returned to its original connotation: a kiss lightly given. Humphry's meaning is none of these, for he has every intention of kissing Dolly with fervor, and one wonders from the stage directions and from the dictionary definition of an eighteenth-century "buss" just what the original audiences must have expected.

Expressions seeming to have belonged particularly to this period of American speech, since they also appear in other comedies of this time but have not continued in the speech tradition, are "free and welcome," "demme," "a fig for your nonsenses," "upon my erudition," "to put someone to the rack," and many references to the Phoenix.

The *Dictionary of American English* gives c.1775 for "I'll lather him for you," an expression which may possibly have sprung from Humphry's conversation with the barber and in which Humphry means "thrash" although the barber means "lather for shaving" and which they finally both interpret as "to whip soundly." "Upper region" to mean "head" rather than the "balcony in a theater" is also from this decade. Dictionary references to "that's the catch" give Barnum's autobiography in 1855 as the earliest reference, yet Humphry uses it in 1789.

Humphry is also responsible for a number of vivid improvisations, "I wouldn't give a leather button for the choice, as the proverb goes," "virtue is but skin deep," "as crooked as a Guinea niger," "cut a dash with the best of them," "He talks Greek like a Trojan," and "a poor shilling that won't buy ale to my oysters."

Evidently a misprint in the manuscript is Humphry's saying, "When the *seed* is stolen, shut the stable door," for there follows a comical discussion as to whether a mare is always a horse or vice versa.

Heavier drama of this period yielded little in the way of proverbial expression. Of the comedies pulled at random from the microprint file and checked for proverbs, no others from the late seventeen hundreds contained any appreciable number of proverbial expressions. However, three comedies from c. 1820 had this same use of proverbs for comic device.² Like *The Politician Out-Witted*, two of the plays rely for their heaviest comedy on a secondary character whose speech is replete with proverbial expressions, some of which are deliberately and others inadvertently misquoted, and with the audience unable to discern which. All make use of high-sounding phrases spoken by one of the leading characters and all are rich sources of cant. Of the four comedies examined for this paper, three assume the audience will understand simple French and its corruption. Whereas American comedy of the 1850's is largely based on situation, these early plays depended heavily on the language used to create their humor. Three make repeated references to places and characters in ancient Greece and Rome. One suspects that today's listening audience might become bored with some of the flights of oratory which were freely inserted in early nineteenth century plays to make the audience laugh.

One wonders whether Humphry Cubb, who as a comedy type lived all alone in the late seventeen hundreds, is responsible for his counterparts who appear in the 1820's. If so, why does more than twenty years elapse before they appear? Perhaps this indicates that *The Politician Out-Witted* is a transition drama, appearing more than a decade ahead of its time. It is easily superior to the other three dramas mentioned here—yet each, in its way, is delightful.

In the following collection, the number prefixed to the quotation is the page on which it appears in *The Politician Out-Witted*. The expressions are alphabetized according to the word italicized.

- 49: "As barren of anything new as an old *Almanac*."
- 2: "as blind as a *bat*." 1639 Apperson, *English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases*, [New York, 1929].
- 48: "a *buck* of the blood." "a bloody *buck*." 1725 Burton Stevenson, *The Home Book of Proverbs, Maxims and Familiar Phrases*, (New York, 1948), *bucks*, "A bold buck is sometimes used to signify a forward, daring Person of either Sex." This reference will subsequently be cited as *Stevenson*.

9: "I wouldn't give a leather *button* for a choice, as the proverb goes." Archer Taylor and B. J. Whiting, *A Dictionary of American Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases 1820-1880* (Cambridge, 1958). "Neither do I give a darn blew *button*." This reference to be cited as *Taylor and Whiting*.

29: "that's the *catch*." 1855 *Dictionary of American English* (Chicago: 1938-44), *catch*. This reference to be cited as *DAE*.

24: "charity begins at home." c.1380 *Apperson*. "Whanne *charity* schuld bigyne at hem-self."

7: "There ain't one of 'um that's a single *copper* before a beggar, as the old saying is."

48: "as far as I could fling a *cow* by the tail." 1853 Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, (New York: 1950), *bull*. This reference to be cited as *Partridge*.

48: "an unlick'd *cub*." John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations* (Boston: 1955), c.1660 "An uneducated lively young man."

26: "cut a *dash* with the best of them." 1844 *Taylor and Whiting*, *cut a dash*.

28: "the *devil* take the snuff and you." 1592 Apperson *you'll mar the light by taking it in snuff*. 1681 Apperson *He took it in snuff (anger)*.

19: "to play the *devil*." 1590 Apperson.

29: "a genteel *dress* is the very soul of a man." This is found in both *The Politician Out-Witted* and *A Country Clown*. Compare with: 1843 Taylor and Whiting *that dress made the man*. 1854 Taylor and Whiting *clothes . . . were to be the making of the man*.

10: "if that doesn't fetch her the *devil* shall, as the saying is."

50: "in the *dumps*." c.1475 Stevenson *as one in doleful dumps*.

12: "everything is beautiful in its season." 1633 Apperson *everything is good in its season*.

8: "evil be to them as evil thinks." 1430 Apperson *for he that caccith to him an yuel name, it is to him a foule fame*. 1386 Apperson *yuel shal have that yuel wol deserve*.

53: "as fixed as *fate*." 1610 Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*.

8: "*father* will bring his pigs to a fine market, as the old proverb goes." 1600 Apperson *father will bring his ho-ho-hogs to a f-f-fair market*.

53: "you did take your *father* in a little." c.400 B.C. Stevenson *they do not take me in*.

10: "without *fear* or reward as the saying is."

50: "a *faux pas*, as the French call it." 1893 Stevenson.

43: "a *fig* for your latin [sic]." 421 B.C. Apperson *I wouldn't give a fig for the pair.* 422 B.C. Stevenson *You're asking me for figs (flattery)*

46: "Beware of *flatterers*." 1387 Stevenson *Enclyne nat thyne eres to flatereres.*

7: "a *friend* in need is a friend indeed." 1270 Apperson *A sug fere be his help in mod.*

2: "petticoat *government*" Bartlett. Unfortunately, he does not give the year but the quotation is from Washington Irving's *Knickerbocker History*, Bk. IV, ch.4.

8: "while the *grass* grows the mare starves." 1440 Apperson *gras growyth.*

25: "make *hay* while the sun shines." 1509 Stevenson *hay.*

55: "you're head's harder than his." 1519 Stevenson *hard heedis.* 1650 Stevenson *Hard-head and Block-head, terms of reproach.* However, in this play Low uses the term to mean "sturdy" or "able to bear the weight of a porter's heavy burden."

16: "he rides his *hobby-horse* again." 1595 Apperson *hobby-horse.*

45: "In the words of the poet, *Honor's* a sacred tie, the law of kings."

34: "she's as slippery as *ice*." Compare with c.1412 Stevenson *mi wit is also slipper as an eel* and 1555 Stevenson *Women are slippery cattayle.*

40: "take the *law* of him." 1800 Stevenson *have the law of you.*

28: "You lie, as the saying is."

47: "like *master* like man." 725 B.C., Apperson *As with the servant, so with his master.* 1548 Stevenson (translation Erasmus' *Paraphrase*) *Lyke men lyke master.* There are also many other versions in English and in other languages.

70: "I am *merry* as a cricket." 1546 Stevenson *merry.*

11: "half a *mind*."

24: "*Money* is the root of all evil." c.350 B.C. Stevenson *the love of money is the mother-city of all evils.*

25: "the *more* we have the more we want." Apperson (quoting Horace) *much would have more.* 1670 Apperson *the more you heap the more you cheap.*

28: "what a *mouth* he makes wherever he goes." Compare with 1732 Stevenson *he has a mouth for every matter.*

27: "he talks as crooked as a Guinea *niger* [sic]."

1: "to suit ones *notion* to a hair." Stevenson *You fit me to a hair* (quoting from Swift, *Polite Conversation*, Dial.l, 1738).

24: "a penny sav'd is a penny got." 1550 Apperson *a halfpenny is as well saved as lost.* 1711 Apperson *a penny saved is a penny got.*

30: "good people, they say, are scarce."

69: "as poor as poverty." Compare with "as poor as a church-mouse," "as poor as Job's turkey."

61: "there's the rub." 1600 Stevenson *there's the rub.*

25: "he has frightened me out of my seventy-seven senses." 1738 Stevenson *seven senses.*

12: "Common sense and propriety are never in season." A contradiction of 1665 Stevenson (La Rochefoucauld, *Maximes*, No. 291) *Men's virtues, like fruits, have their season.*

49: "a poor shilling that won't buy ale to my oysters," This phrase "ale to my oysters" is known to the author but she was unable to locate it either under "shilling" or under "ale."

23: "It's a wise son knows his own father." c.800 B.C. Apperson.

25: "no sooner said than done." 1546 Stevenson *sooner said than done.*

45: "a fine story of a cock and bull." 1608 Stevenson *a tale of a cock and bull.*

1: "There's nothing new under the sun." c. 250 B.C. Stevenson *There is no new thing under the sun.*

8: "when the seed is stolen, shut the stable door." Evidently a misprint. See: 1390 Apperson *For when the grete stiede is stole . . . maketh the stable fast.*

26: "fight like a [sic] tyger." 1836 Taylor and Whiting

11: "under the thumb . . . under the devil." 1754 Stevenson *I have her under my thumb.*

10: "I shouldn't get top-heavy, as the saying is." 1736 Partridge. *top-heavy* meaning drunk."

9: "the toss up of a copper." 1809 Partridge *It's a toss-up who fails and who succeeds.*

70: "never was put too much to my trumps." 1559 Stevenson *put to his trumps.*

8: "One good turn deserves another, as the old saying is." 1546 Apperson *one good turn asketh another.* 1638 Apperson *deserves.*

26: "[sic] vartue is but skin deep." Compare with 1636 Stevenson *Virtue's but a word* and also 1775 Stevenson *No virtue . . . is beyond temptation.*

28: "shav'd clean as a whistle." 1828 Stevenson *whistle.*

49: "et it going like wild-fire." NED; 1825 Taylor and Whiting *wild-fire.*

71: "youth and beauty were not meant for age." This is a quotation from a poem which the author has been unable to re-locate. The nearest she has been able to find are 1595, 1659, 1697 Stevenson *youth and age will never agree*, even when cross-referenced under *age* and *beauty*.

Clichés and conventional phrases which appear in *The Politician Out-Witted* are:

- 29: "with all my heart."
- 18: "to kill a (heavy) hour."
- 32: "I feel my mind . . . pretty much at ease."
- 41: "a particle the wiser."
- 50: "wandering from the paths of virtue."
- 8: "at your [sic] service, as the saying is."
- 16: "sprout away" meaning *let off steam* or *get it off your chest*.
- 17: "strange as it may seem."

Briefly summarized the second play, *A Country Clown*, is a one-act farce of language. A newly-rich farmer has come to town to live in the style he now feels is both his due and his obligation. As he attempts to talk like a city dweller, buy suitable new clothes, and court a young woman, we are both amused by his mixed-up pretensions and introduced to the cant of the times.

No effort has been made to check the earliest sources of the phrases listed:

- 1: "blow them up with gunpowder" In *The Politician Out-Witted* the long form was also used, rather than today's elliptical *to blow up*.
- 1: "to wake the seven sleepers"
- 2: "tip of the mode."
- 3: "the tonsors" meaning *barber*.
- 3: "the more free the more welcome." Compare with *make free and welcome* in *The Politician*.
- 3: "Coming. So is Christmas." This is also a favorite expression with the author's family.
- 4: "as if the devil was after you."
- 4: "dog of a waiter" reminiscent of Shakespeare's *dog of a Jew*.
- 5: "a pair of agonies." Cant for shoes.
- 5: "a low hawker."
- 6: "a baker's dozen."
- 6: "Odd numbers, they say, are lucky numbers."
- 6: "cut a fine figure."
- 9: "by the first bloods of the ton."
- 9: "by jing."
- 9: "dang it."

10: "a man of the town."
10: "diamond cut diamond."
10: "your tongue runs like a mill clapper."
10: "he means to pay his expects to you."
11: "throw myself at your feet."
11: "in the excess of the fashion."
11: "us giddy girls"
12: "clodhopper."
12: "you'll slip through my fingers."
12: "a devilish trick."
12: "butter wouldn't melt in their mouths." Here used to mean it wouldn't have time to melt.

Although written and performed in America, *How to Try a Lover* is laid in Spain and witnesses the trials and tribulations of a young *caballero*, a Don Juan who finally meets the girl he could really love.

Only proverbs and proverbial expressions from the first act were excerpted, enough to show Pacomo to be a servant wit of the Humphry Cubb character:

6: "in the very nick."
6: "a parcel of troopers."
6: "in a twink."
7: "I have my cold fits, like my betters."
7: "This makes good the proverb, 'Grasp at a woman and hold a nettle.'"
7: "your epithets . . . make but a bitter pill."
9: "the murder's out."
9: "out of the frying pan into the fire."
10: "fellow sufferers."
11: "what a bloody-looking fellow."
12: "how like a hang-dog he looks."

Whereas *How to Try a Lover*, written in 1817, has a foreign setting, *The Pedlar* takes place in Kentucky in 1821. The cant and proverbial expression were excerpted from all three acts by William Tillson and used here with his permission. Not all of the excerpts are included, just enough to show their tie-in with other comedies of this period and are numbered by acts:

I: "dark nights for trade, art, and mysteries."
I: "to complete the frolic."
I: "mind your knitting."
I: "stow 'em away against a rainy day, as the saying is."

I: ". . . succeed better than Diogenes in searching for an honest man." The speaker, here, is a man known as Old Prairie.

II: "As fine hog and housing as any farmer in Kentucky."

II: "carry your horse to the stable."

II: "misery loves company."

II: "the size of a marlin spike."

II: "snug as a bug in the rug."

II: "about these parts."

II: "a new light you've thrown on the subject."

III: "turned me out to graze."

III: "a good beginning makes a bad ending." Corrupted here for humor and satire.

III: "cozy" and "happy as a lord." Expressions for drunk.

III: "a wolf in sheep's clothing."

III: "I smell a rat."

III: "this little petticoat Governor." Also used in *The Politician*.

From the rich quantity of proverbial expression in this small sampling of Early American comedies, 1789-1829, it would seem that further study of the drama, and particularly comedy, would be not only worthwhile but also desirable.

NOTES

¹ Samuel Low, *The Politician Out-Witted* (New York, 1789), Readex Microprint, Courtesy New York Public Library (1952).

² John A. Paxton, *The Pedler*, St. Louis Thespians (St. Louis, 1821), Readex Microprint, Courtesy Harvard Library.

James Nelson Barker, *How To Try a Lover*, (Boston, 1817) Readex Microprint (1954).

Alphonse Wetmore, *A Country Clown or Dandyism Improved* (Annapolis, 1829), Courtesy American Antiquarian Society, Readex Microprint (1952).

BY ED CRAY
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"THE SOLDIER'S DECK OF CARDS" AGAIN

FOLKLORISTS STILL have much to learn of the functional interrelationship between oral tradition and the so-called "popular" arts. For this reason, the following texts of "The Soldier's Deck of Cards" (*Type 1613, H 603), a tale which appears to be more widespread than previously thought, may be considered to be of value.¹

The previously printed English language text of this formula tale was sent by David S. McIntosh to *Midwest Folklore* after Alexander Scheiber had passed along German and Hungarian versions of the tale.²

With the following versions it is possible to add both historical depth and geographical breadth to the "recovered" texts. The

earliest version at hand was copied *literatim* and *verbatim* from a broadside published by the profligate J. Catnach, 2, & 3, Monmouth-Court, 7 Dials.³

"The Perpetual Almanack;" or, Gentleman Soldier's Prayer Book: Showing how one Richard Middleton was taken before the Mayor of the City he was in, for using Cards in Church during Divine Services: being a droll, merry, and humorous account of an odd affair that happened to a Private Soldier, in the 60th Regiment of Foot.

The sergeant commanded his party to the church, and when the parson had ended his prayer, he took his text and all of them that had a Bible, pulled it out to find the text, but this soldier had neither Bible, Almanack, nor Common Prayer Book, but he put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a pack of Cards, and spread them before him so he sat, and while the parson was preaching he first kept looking at one card and then another. The serjeant of the company saw him, & said, Richard put up your cards for this is no place for them—Never mind that, said the soldier, for you have no business with me here.

Now the parson had ended his sermon, and all was over the soldiers repaired to the churchyard and the commanding officer gave the word of command to fall in which they did. The serjeant of the city came and took the man prisoner—Man you are my prisoner, Said he. Sir, said the soldier what have I done that I am your prisoner?—You have played a game of cards in the church, No said the soldier, I have not play'd a game, for I only look'd at a pack. No matter for that, you are my prisoner. Where must we go; said the soldier. You must go before the mayor, said the serjeant.

So he took him before the mayor; and when they came to the mayor's house he was at dinner. When he had dined he came to them, and said, well serjeant, what do you want with me; I have brought a soldier before your honour for playing at cards in the church. What! that soldier! Yes, well soldier, what have you to say for yourself? much, sir, I hope. Well and good but if you have not, you shall be punished the worst that ever man was. Sir, said the soldier, I have been five weeks upon the march and have but little to subsist on & am without either Bible Almanack, or Common Prayer Book, or any thing but a pack of cards, I hope to satisfy your honour of the purity of my intention.

The the soldier pulled out of his pocket the pack of cards, which he spread before the mayor, he then began with the ace.

When I see the ace, said he, it puts me in mind, that there is one God only; when I see the duce, it puts me in mind of the Father and the Son; when I see the tray, it puts me in mind of the four Evangelist that preached the gosple, viz, Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John; when I see the five, it puts me in mind of the five wise virgins that trimmed their lamps, there were ten but five were foolish who were shut out; when I see the six, it puts me in mind that in six days the Lord made Heaven and Earth; When I see the seven it puts me in mind that the seventh day God rested from all the works which he had created and made, wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it; when I see the eight it puts me in mind of the eight righteous persons that were saved when God drowned the world, viz, Noar, his wife, three sons and their wives; when I see the nine, it puts me in mind of nine leopards that were cleasend by our Saviour; there were ten, but nine never returned God Thanks, when I see the ten, it puts me in mind of the ten commandments that God gave Moses on Mount Sinai, on the two tables of stone.

He took the knave and laid it aside.

When I see the queen, it puts me in mind of the queen of Sheba who came from the furthermost parts of the world to hear the wisdom of King Soloman, for she was as wise a woman, as he was a man, for she brought fifty boys and fifty girls, all cloathed in boys apparel, to show before King Solomon, for him to tell which are boys and which were girls; but he could not until he called for water for them to wash themselves; the girls washed up to their elbows and the boys only up to their wrist, so King Solomon told by that.⁴ And also of Queen Victoria, to pray for her. And when I see the King, it puts me in mind of the great King of Heaven and Earth, which is God Almighty.

Well, said the mayor you have given a very good discription of all of the cards, except one, which is lacking. What is that? said the soldier. The knave, said the mayor. Oh I can give your honour a good description of that, if your honour won't be angry. No I will not says the mayor, if you will not term me to be the knave.

Well, said the soldier, the greatest that I know of is the serjeant of the city that brought me here, I don't know, said the mayor, that he is the greatest knave, but I am sure he is the greatest fool.

I shall now show your honour how I use the cards as an Almanack. You certainly are a clever fellow, said the mayor, but I think you'll have a hard matter to make that appear.

When I count how many spots there are in a pack of cards, I find there are three hundred and sixty-five, there are so many days in the year.

Stop, said, the mayor, that's a mistake. I grant it, said the soldier, but as I have never yet seen an almanack that is thoroughly correct in all points, it would have been impossible for me to imitate an almanack exactly without a mistake. Your observations are very correct, said the mayor, go on. When I count how many cards there are in a pack, I find there are fifty two there are so many weeks in the year; when I count how many tricks there are in a pack, I find there are thirteen there are so many months in a year.⁵ You see sir, that is Pack o Cards is a Bible, Almanack, Common Prayer Book and Pack of Cards to me,

Then the Mayor called for a loaf of bread, a piece of cheese and a pot of good, beer, and gave to the soldier a piece of money, bidding him to go about his business saying, he was the cleverest man he had ever seen.

The second version from an early twentieth century jokebook was provided by Frank Hoffman:

THE RELIGIOUS CARD PLAYER

A private soldier, by the name of Richard Lee, was taken before the magistrates of Glasgow for playing cards during divine services.

A sergeant commanded the soldiers at the church, and when the parson had read the prayers he took the text. Those who had a Bible, took it out; but this soldier had neither Bible nor common prayer-book, but pulling out a pack of cards, he spread them before him. He first looked at one card and then another. The sergeant of the company saw him and said:

"Richard, put up the cards; this is no place for them."

"Never mind that," said Richard.

When the services were over, the constable took Richard a prisoner, and brought him before the mayor.

"Well," said the mayor, "What have you brought the soldier here for?"

"For playing cards in the church."

"Well, soldier, what have you to say for yourself?"

"Much sir, I hope."

"Very good; if not, I will punish you severely."

"I have been," said the soldier, "about six weeks on the march. I have neither Bible nor common prayer-book; I have nothing but

a pack of cards and I hope to satisfy your worship of the purity of my intentions."

Then spreading the cards before the mayor he began with the ace:

"When I see the ace it reminds me that there is but one God.

"When I see the deuce it reminds me of the Father and Son.

"When I see the tray it reminds me of Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

"When I see the four it reminds me of the four Evangelists that preached—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

"When I see the five it reminds me of the five wise virgins that trimmed their lamps. There were ten, but five were wise and five were foolish, and were shut out.

"When I see the six it reminds me that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth.

"When I see the seven it reminds me that on the seventh day God rested from the great work which he had made, and hallowed it.

"When I see the eight it reminds me of the eight righteous persons that were saved when God destroyed the world, viz.: Noah, and his wife, his three sons and their wives.

"When I see the nine it reminds me of the nine lepers that were cleansed by our Saviour. There were nine out of the ten who never returned thanks.

"When I see the ten it reminds me of the ten commandments which God handed down to Moses on the tables of stone.

"When I see the king it reminds me of the Great King of Heaven, which is God almighty.

"When I see the queen it reminds me of the Queen of Sheba, who visited Solomon, for she was as wise a woman as he was a man. She brought with her fifty boys and fifty girls all dressed in boy's apparel, for King Solomon to tell which were boys and which were girls. The king sent for water for them to wash. The girls washed to the elbows and the boys to the wrist; so King Solomon told by that."

"Well," said the mayor, "You have described every card in the pack except one."

"What is that?"

"The knave," said the mayor.

"I will give your honor a description of that too, if you will not be angry."

"I will not," said the mayor, "if you do not term me to be the knave."

"The greatest knave I know of is the constable that brought me here."

"I do not know," said the mayor, "if he is the greatest knave, but I know he is the greatest fool."

"When I count how many spots there are in a pack of cards, I find three hundred and sixty-five, as many days as there are in a year.

"When I count the number of cards in a pack I find fifty-two—the number of weeks in a year.

"I find there are twelve picture cards in a pack, representing the number of months in a year, and on counting the tricks I find thirteen, the number of weeks in a quarter.

"So, you see, a pack of cards, serve for a Bible, almanac, and common prayer-book."⁶

This *Comic Songs* text is undoubtably related to the earlier Catnach broadside. The changes which have been made are few: Queen Victoria's honorarium (perhaps a line appended by Catnach to an earlier version) is gone and there is no challenge on the total number of spots in the deck. The correct number, incidentally, is 220, unless one counts as spots the jack (eleven), the queen (twelve) and the king (thirteen). These values added, the spots total 364, perhaps close enough. The 365th day can be added if you consider the joker, or bug, as an ace (one).

About 1949, T. Texas Tyler first recorded "Deck of Cards" for King Records, Cincinnati, Ohio. His hit single was anthologized in long playing form in 1960, offering this version (rendered with electronic organ accompaniment). Whatever Tyler's source, his version is still close to the Catnach singlesheet.

DECK OF CARDS

Friends, this is T. Texas Tyler with a strange story about a soldier boy and a deck of cards.

During the North African campaign, a bunch of soldier boys had been on a long hike and they arrived in a little town called Cassino. The next morning being Sunday, several of the boys went to church. A sergeant commanded the boys in church and after the chaplain read the prayer, the text was taken up next. Those of the boys who had a prayerbook took them out but this one boy had only a deck of cards and so he spread them out. The sergeant

saw the cards and said, "Soldier, put away those cards." After the services was over the soldier was taken prisoner and brought before the provost marshall. The marshall said, "Sergeant, why have you brought this man here?"

"For playing cards in church, sir."

"And what have you to say for yourself, son?"

"Much, sir," replied the soldier.

The marshall said, "I hope so, for if not, I shall punish you more than any man was ever punished."

The soldier said, "Sir, I been on the march for about six days. I had neither Bible nor prayerbook but I hope to satisfy you, sir, with the purity of my intentions." With that, the boy started his story.

"You see, sir, when I look at the ace, it reminds me that there is but one God. And the deuce reminds me that the Bible is divided into two parts, the Old and the New Testament. And when I see the trey, I think of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. And when I see the four, I think of the four evangelists who preached the gospel; there was Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. And when I see the five, it reminds me of the five wise virgins who trimmed their lamps. There were ten of them but five were wise and were saved; five were foolish and were shut out. And when I see the six, it reminds me that in six days God made this great Heaven and Earth. When I see the seven, it reminds me that on the seventh day God rested from this great work. And when I see the eight, I think of the eight righteous persons God saved when he destroyed this earth; there was Noah (pronounced "Noay"), his wife, their three sons and their wives. And when I see the nine, I think of the lepers our Saviour cleansed and nine out of the ten didn't even thank him. When I see the ten I think of the Ten Commandments God handed down to Moses on a table of stone. When I see the King, it reminds me that there is but one King of Heaven, God Almighty. And when I see the queen, I think of the blessed Virgin Mary who's Queen of Heaven. And the jack of knaves (pronounced "knay") is the devil. When I count the number of spots on a deck of cards, I find 365, the number of days in a year. There is 52 cards, the number of weeks in a year. There is four suits, the number of weeks in a month; there is 12 picture cards, the number of months in a year.⁷ There is 13 tricks, the number of weeks in a quarter. So you see, sir, my pack of cards serves me as a Bible, almanac and prayerbook."⁸

And, friends, this story's true. I know 'cause I was that soldier.⁸

This, or some other commercial recording, has been redacted by W. F. Stewart:

THE SOLDIER'S PRAYERBOOK

You've heard about the soldier and the deck of cards,
In battle he has proven true as gold,
Arrested in the chapel, accused of mocking God,
The most amazing story ever told.

"Sir, I have no Bible, just this deck of cards.
I spread them out before me when I pray.
They serve me as a prayerbook when I kneel down to God;
Listen, sir, to what I have to say."

"The ace is my reminder of the one and only God;
The deuce is for the Bible, new and old.
The trey is for the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost,
About whom in the Bible we are told."

"The four spot it tells me who preached the holy word;
There was Mark and Matthew, Luke and John.
Five is for the virgins who were wise and were saved;
There were ten but five were told to travel on."

"Six days God was working and the seventh he did rest.
The eight righteous persons were saved
When this earth it was destroyed
The rest are all a-sleeping in the grave."

"Nine is for the lepers that were cleansed by His Name
And nine of the ten did not atone.
God's Ten Commandments, the ten spot it recalls;
He gave to Moses written on a stone."

"The jack is for the devil; Virgin Mary is the queen.
The king is for the greatest of them all,
Challenged by old Satan a long time ago,
That is when He called the stars to fall."

"When the spots are counted on a deck of cards,
With the days of the year, they compare.
Twelve that have pictures, there are 52 in all,
For the months and weeks of the year."

This analogy of the Bible and the deck of cards,
The strangest story we have ever heard.
The amazing explanation of the soldier boy
That a deck of cards can spread God's Holy Word.⁹

Radio Favorites Songs has also a sharply updated version of the tale under the title, "The Red Deck of Cards." This too may have been a commercial recording but its popularity would seem to depend

largely upon the listener's identification with the more traditional form of the tale.

THE RED DECK OF CARDS

It was during the last days of the prisoner exchange in Korea. I was there as they came through "Freedom Gate," shattered, sick and lame. And there in a Red Cross tent as a weary group rested, a soldier broke out a deck of cards. A look of hate crossed the tired face of one boy as he sprang up, knocking the cards to the ground. As the cards lay around, many face up, he picked up the ACE and began:

"I hate cards," he said. "The Commies tried to use them to teach us their false doctrine. They told us the ACE meant that there is but one God, the State. We know that to be untrue for we were religious boys. And the DEUCE meant that there were two great leaders, Lenin and Stalin. We could not swallow that. And this TREY stood for the three religious superstitions that the Red would soon destroy, the Catholic, the Protestant and the Jewish."

"This black FOUR," the soldier boy continued, "stood for the four corners of the earth where the hammer and sickle would soon reign supreme. There in that prison camp, we hoped it was a lie. And this red FIVE was the five points in their red star." Tears were streaming down the boy's face as he picked up the six. "And this SIX, the Commies told us, stood for the six and final wars that America had 'luckily' won, the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Spanish American War, World War I and World War II. Now in this war, America would be destroyed. And the SEVEN stood for our foolish day, Sunday, which we wasted on our Lord. The EIGHT stood for the eight hours every day we would have to spend learning to be Progressives. The NINE for the cat-o'-nine-tails lashed across our back if we ever knelt to pray. The TEN was to remind us that our Ten Commandments were ten 'stupid rules' that capitalistic fools believed in."

"The JACK meant that Christ was a knave of uncertain birth. The QUEEN that Mary his mother was a non-virtuous woman, and the KING stood for our Lord God, whom the Commies told us did not exist, a dream—a fake—a joke."

"The HEART stood for Christ's blood, all shed in vain. The DIAMOND signified the real precious jewel, the Communist Party. The CLUB, the weapon of oppression with which they beat us, and the SPADE, a tool with which we would dig our own graves."

"This was THE RED DECK OF CARDS."

"Fellows, that's why I hate cards," the soldier boy said, as his buddies picked up the cards, tore them into pieces, and with shining faces walked toward a simple chapel in Korea.¹⁰

If re-creations such as this are a mark of the popularity of the "original," then "The Soldier's Deck of Cards" would seem to be a great deal more widespread than has been reported.

NOTES

¹ See Terence Hansen, *The Types of the Folktale in Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Spanish South America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1957), p. 142, for a totally unexpected version from Argentina.

² See *MF* II (1952), pp. 93-100, 219-220.

³ In "Catnach Ballads" (Binder's title), Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California, acquisition number 297337. The collection is dated, perhaps arbitrarily, 1813. Though Jemmy Catnach started in business in 1813, this particular whiteletter broadside must date from either 1837 or 1838 (Catnach's last year before heirs took over) simply because Queen Victoria, mentioned in the story, ascended the throne in 1837.

⁴ H 540.2.1.

⁵ Lunar months. See note seven below.

⁶ Credited to Anonymous in *Comic Songs, Funny Stories and Recitations* (Max Stein and Co., Chicago, ca. 1915).

⁷ Calendar months, this time, not lunar. The shift from lunar to calendar months may be one of the many little changes wrought by urbanization.

⁸ T. Texas Tyler, "Deck of Cards," on *T. Texas Tyler* (King 664, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1960). Tyler may not have been the first to record the recitation. In a paperbound anthology of sacred and gospel songs, *Radio Favorites Songs* [sic] offered by Arlen and Jackie Vaden ("The Southern Gospel Singers," to listeners of Station KXEL, Waterloo, Iowa, an almost identical version appears. "Cassino," a city in Italy and not North Africa, is changed to "Glasco" in the variant printed by the Vadens, perhaps linking it to the *Comic Songs* etc. text. Considering the various slight differences between the Vaden and Tyler texts, it is likely that the Vadens copied another commercial record, perhaps one by Ernest Tubb which I have been unable to locate.

⁹ Credited to W. F. Stewart as sung by The Stewart Family on *The Stewart Family Sings Country Sacred Songs* (King 687, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1960).

¹⁰ Arlen and Jackie Vaden, *Radio Favorites Songs* [sic] (Waterloo, Iowa, 1958?), no pagination. I owe this reference to Robert Leventhal who scanned the radio dial for just such offerings while on a cross-country auto trip in 1958.

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GHASTLY COMMANDS: THE CRUEL JOKE REVISITED

JOKE SERIES SEEM to arise with a flash and die a long death. The 'moron' jokes that were so prevalent at the beginning of World War II are still to be encountered, though usually, it is true, from children. Other series have had an even longer and lustier career; one thinks immediately of the 'Wise Men of Gotham' anecdotes that were to be found in England for many centuries (perhaps through the influence of chapbooks). These series can achieve a continuity either through form (the "knock-knock" for instance) or content (of which the 'brag' or 'boast' might be an illustration).

Some of these seem to arise merely because of a sudden fascination with the possibilities of a form or a mold. They are an exercise in what Freud called "harmless wit," "wit for its own sake (which)

serves no other purpose." The moron joke is perhaps a good example of this. In this cycle we have a very strictly regulated form that gives a firm structure to an otherwise poor pun or absurdity. We are concerned only with the deftness of the individual joke within the form, not with what or at whom the joke is directed at (i.e., the moron does not exist except as a spokesman of the pun or absurdity).

Why did the moron throw the clock
out of the window?

—He wanted to see time fly.

Why did the moron climb on top
of the tavern?

—Because he heard that drinks
were on the house.

To be sure, this is simply a rejuvenation of the old conundrum form, but the American culture seems to have seized upon it for a short time in order to give vent to its impulse to create humor, a certain and precise kind of pleasure.

Yet all humor, and all joke series, are by no means "harmless wit," fashioned merely for the pleasure of the triumph of the mind or the word process. Much humor is generated for a very different psychic purpose and takes the form of what Freud calls "tendency wit," wit that not only serves the purposes of ingenuity but does so in response to some need for psychic release. All sexual jokes are examples of tendency wit because they liberate, through the formal unity of the anecdote (or quip, or whatever form it happens to take) certain impulses that otherwise would find no expression. Thus the jokes illustrative of "tendency wit" can act as a kind of release mechanism. This functions in most cases on two levels, the societal and the psychological. But though it is acting on two levels it functions together simultaneously as a synchronism. On the effect level (i.e., where the laughter is produced), the two interact. For the purposes of analysis, however, we must separate them.

We see this dual principle illustrated in many of the joke cycles that are current today. We are in the midst of an "age of sincerity" and of the social and scientific movements, having great effect upon society. The joke serves as a valve to eliminate, without real mockery, the excesses of the age. A good instance of this is the recent jokes that have emerged concerning the integrationist movement in the United States. A number of stories have emerged, told principally by those much in favor of integration, that gently jab at the excessive sincerity, or should we say, lack of sense of humor on the part of

many members of the movement. Perhaps the most common joke of this sort involves the man who calls up the office of the NAACP:

Hello, could I speak to the head nigger, please.
But Sir! We don't talk like that here.
"Look, let me speak to the head nigger, will you?"
"But Sir, we don't speak like that here."
"Look let me speak to the head nigger, will you.
I want to give some money."
"Just a minute and I'll get the black bastard for you."¹

In the same way we tend to react to the advertising world that surrounds us by fashioning the "Madison Avenue" joke and to the excessive sentiment attached to the young through the "Goosed Mother" rhymes.

Probably the most socially iconoclastic joke cycle that has recently seen the light of day is the so-called "cruel joke." As Brian Sutton-Smith remarked in an article in *Midwest Folklore* recently, "All of these cruel jokes have in common a disregard for sentiments which are usually taken very seriously. The afflictions of others which are normally treated with considerable sensitivity or tenderness, the love for children which is regarded as 'human nature,' the respect for religious institutions and revered persons which is customarily thought to be basic, are in these jokes made the subject matter of amusement."² Obviously society, or that segment of society which has transmitted these jokes, has been saturated by the excess of sincerity that has become attached to these concerns. It seems to me that the purveyors of these jokes are not reacting in favor of more disease, but rather against the bombardment to which Madison Avenue in league with charities has subjected the public in the form of charity appeals; they are not reacting against churches so much as against the "A family that prays together, stays together" type of campaign. Even more, they seem to be revolting against the excesses and corruptions of Freudian dogma, especially in regard to parent-child relationships.

This kind of morbid humor is certainly not a new matter. Somehow the "Dance of Death," the *momenti mori*, has always had its humorous as well as horrible aspect. Need we mention anything more than the graveyard scene in *Hamlet*. Neither has it been absent from the folklore of the past. Sutton-Smith points up the similarities of this series and both the Little Willie and the Little Audrey cycles. In the same manner, one of the most popular songs among youth is:

Did you ever think when the hearse goes by
That you may be the next to die.
They wrap you up in a big white sheet

They drop you down for fifty feet.
 And all goes well for about a week.
 But then your coffin begins to leak.
 When you die its not the best
 The worms play pinochle on your chest.
 The worms crawl in, the worms crawl out.
 The worms play pinochle on your snout.
 The worms crawl out, the worms crawl in.
 The worms play pinochle on your chin.
 They eat your eyes, they eat your nose
 They eat the jelly between your toes.
 Your body turns a sickly green
 And pus pours out like whipping cream.

(collected in similar form in Colorado,
 New York, Pennsylvania, Texas.)

Another song that has achieved oral currency attacks many of the same problems as the "sick" joke:

The other night my baby sister died.
 She died committing suicide.
 She died just to spite us.
 Of spinal meningitis.
 She was a dirty baby anyhow.
 We ate her.

(Pennsylvania)

The same is true of the parody of "Jealousy":

Leprosy, ye gods, I've got leprosy
 There goes my eye-ball,
 Into my highball.
 Leprosy, it's creeping all over me.
 There goes my left ear,
 Into my root beer.
 Leprosy, ye gods, I've got leprosy,
 There goes my toe-nail
 Into the milk pail.
 Leprosy, it's creeping all over me.
 There goes my two lips,
 Into the mint julips.

(Pennsylvania, California)

Even closer to these jokes is the currently popular parody to the tune of the chorus of "Marching Through Georgia":

Hurrah, hurrah, my mother's gonna be hung.
 Hurrah, hurrah, the dirty drunken bum.
 She was very mean to me when I was very young.
 Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah, they're hanging mother.
 Hurrah, hurrah, my father's gonna be shot.

Hurrah, hurrah, the dirty drunken sot.
He was very mean to me when I was but a tot.
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah they're shooting father.
Hurrah, hurrah, my uncle's gonna be hurt.
Hurrah, hurrah, the dirty sex pervert.
He used me very poorly when I was but a squirt.
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah they're hurting uncle.

(Colorado, New York City, Pennsylvania)

This is certainly the utterance of Freud-oriented society laughing at itself.

But the major expression of these sentiments has undoubtedly been the "cruel joke" series. These jokes present some interesting problems. In the first place, the texts of the jokes that Sutton-Smith prints are amazingly uniform in regard to form, and this form seems almost unique in the history of oral lore. As Sutton-Smith points out, the "counter-pointing of naivety and cynicism" is the dominant form and this, to some extent, can be found in the earlier "Little Audrey" series. Yet the series did not have the terseness that the present one does.

The prevalent form of these jokes is what could be called caption style, or "blackout line"; they have a vignette or tableau effect. They seem to be captions below a cartoon with the picture implied, and indeed the form of the joke may come from exactly this source. Another possibility is that they have the form of the one or two line joke followed by a quick curtain or blackout that was popular on the vaudeville stage. In most cases the verbal form is a strict one: a pleading question directed at a parent by a child followed by an answer usually prefaced by the command to "shut up." The other most common form is the one-line joke with the implied picture; this is most common in the historical and religious jokes.

It is this quick, vignette quality, with the implied setting, that unites jokes that in subject matter are extremely disparate and sets them off from other joke forms. Perhaps the easiest way to illustrate this is to compare two jokes of the same point but different form. Sutton-Smith's joke number 39 is:

"Son, will you quit kicking your sister."
"Oh, that's all right. She's already dead."

This is closely related to a joke that was current in my childhood in Philadelphia (circa 1942):

This boy was walking down the street kicking
a baby. A policeman walked up to him and

said, "What are you doing there?" "I'm kicking the baby down the street." "You're what?" "Oh, it's all right, he's dead."

It is precisely this conscious formal unity that enables the teller of these jokes to violate the taboos of our society in talking about cannibalism, incest, fecal matters, etc. Many such matters are talked of openly through the similarly strict form of the limerick, for instance. Formal wit is used to liberate anti-taboo laughter. The reason: on the society-level to create a check against the excesses of itself. But this, as indicated before, is only half the story. It is our synchronism, the dual effect, of individuals within society that create, transmit, approve these jokes. And the "cruel series" certainly represents a kind of individual psychic liberation as well as a social one. As usual, Freud gives us great insights into matters on the level of the individual reaction (especially on the unconscious level):

Owing to the repression brought about by civilization many primary pleasures are now disapproved by censorship and lost. But the human psyche finds renunciation very difficult; hence we discover that tendency-wit furnishes us with a means to make the renunciation retrogressive and thus to regain what has been lost.³

These jokes then are enactments of a side of our nature that is definitely there but severely repressed. They are vicarious, however, in affect. The obscene joke expresses this in sexual terms; the "hostile" joke (akin to cynicism, skepticism, etc.) which is the category in which the cruel joke certainly resides, externalizes some of our other impulses which have been repressed.

Since our individual childhood and the childhood of human civilization, our hostile impulses toward our fellow-beings have been subjected to the same restrictions and the same progressive repressions as our sexual strivings. We have not yet progressed so far as to love our enemies, or to extend to them our left cheek after we are smitten on the right . . . Within our own circles we have nevertheless made progress in the mastery of hostile emotions.⁴

The "cruel joke" series is an expression in terms of the closely organized confines of wit that otherwise must remain unexpressed, repressed. We can laugh at them because we have progressed beyond the stage where we have to fear for our own well-being through their physical expression, but it is a nervous kind of laughter because of the strictures of society that otherwise operate on these subjects and because of the unconscious realization that it is an expression of a repressed tendency on our own part that we realize under undue strain, abnormal conditions, could easily reassert itself.

It is interesting to notice that the cruel joke series has found a variety of other expressions than just the caption or vignette form. But it must also be noted that each of the subsequent forms into which it has proliferated has an equally strong formal requirement.

There are some texts that Sutton-Smith prints that differ from this vignette form. Numbers 46, 47, 68 and 121 are in standard anecdote-with-punch-line form. Numbers 139 ("Little Jack Horner sat in a corner beating his brother") and 140 (Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall/ Humpty Dumpty had a great fall./ All the Kings horses and all the King's men, Ate egg.) Belong to the type usually called "Goosed Mother" rhymes that have been current during the same period as the "cruel" joke. Some of these, collected within the last two years in Philadelphia are:

Ding dong bell,
Pussy in the well.
God damn fool jumped in and drowned herself.

Little Miss Muffet,
Sat on her tuffet,
Eating dirt.⁵

Or these from Texas:

Jack Horner sat in the corner eating his brother.

Little Miss Muffet
Sat on her tuffet,
Eating her curds and whey
Along came a spider
And sat down beside her
And she squashed it.

Jack-be-nimble
Jack-be-quick
Jack jumped over the candle stick and burned himself.

A recent spot check among approximately fifty college students in Texas shows not only a number of the true form of "cruel" jokes but also a number in these related forms. One of the most interesting of these might be called the "cruel conundrum."

What is black and white has three eyes?

Sammy Davis Jr. and May Britt.

What has 1000 legs and can't walk?

500 crippled children. (*See Sutton-Smith, #102*)

What is the theme song of the epileptic ward?

"There's a Whole Lot of Shaking Going On."

What is black, hairy and crawls.
Roy Campanella.

What is the theme song of the polio ward?
"You'll Never Walk Alone."

What were Tarzan's last words?
"Somebody greased my grape-vine."

What were Custer's last words?
"I never saw so damn many Indians in my life."

What were Davy Crockett's last words?
"Who forgot to shut the door?"

What is the difference between Santa Claus and God?
There is a Santa Claus.

Another is the "cruel pun."

Looking out the window I saw the children at plague.

"No, Mrs. Dooley, we haven't see Tom hanging around here."
(see Sutton-Smith #58)

Mommy, I just passed Grandma in the forest.
Couldn't you wait till you got home?

The family that flays together, stays together.
(Reported to be found in the window of a San Francisco store.)

The cannibal passed his brother in the field.

Or the 'sick proverbial comparison':

As funny as a barrel of chopped-up babies on Mother's Day.
As funny as a blizzard in a nudist camp.
As funny as a one-legged bullfighter.
As funny as a one-legged man in an ass-kicking contest.
As funny as cancer.
As funny as a cannibal queer.
As funny as a dead body.
As funny as a waxed floor in a polio ward.
As funny as a frog on a freeway with his hopper cut off.
As funny as a burning hospital.
As funny as a plane wreck.
As funny as a pregnant high-diver (or jumper, or pole-vaulter.)
As funny as a pregnant nun.
As funny as a rubber crutch.
As funny as sliding down a fifty foot razor blade and landing
in a tub of alcohol.
As funny as a submarine with screen doors.
As out-of-place as a pay-toilet in a diarrhea ward.
As helpful as a basket-case.
As happy as a vampire in a vegetable garden.
As useful as a football in a polio ward.

Or the "cruel definition":

Definition of communion: swallow the leader.

The most popular of recent additions to this literature and also the most difficult to describe are the "cruel gesture joke."

- (holding eyes up and aslant) "My mother was a Chinese,
- (holding eyes down and aslant) My father was a Japanese,
- (holding one up and one down) And I'm just crazy."
- (holding hands in front of you as if holding something)
"Poor little butterfly. No father, no mother. No sister,
no brother." (pull hands apart) "No wings."
- (holding two hands in front of face, one in deformed position)
"Dear Lord, make my hand like the other." (slowly good hand
assumes deformed position.)
- (holding arms out to side, hands lin p)
"What a hell of a way to spend Easter."
- (same)
"Wait till I tell my father on you"
- (holding hands above head, palms forward, fingers curled)
"Hey, Mrs. Jones, would you please open the car door."
- (holding eyes aslant) "Mommy, don't you think you're
pulling my pony-tail too tight?"

The "Little Annie" series are very similar:

- (holding one hand cupped in front) "Little Annie has Cerebral Palsy and has been working very hard and has finally after many months improved enough to eat an ice-cream cone."
(She strains very hard to raise the cone to her face and finally manages to move it upward, but spastically rams it into her forehead.)

"Little Annie, now throw away your right crutch" (She motions to do so.)

"Little Annie, now throw away your left crutch." (She motions to do so.)

"Now isn't that wonderful. Now Little Annie, say 'hello' to the nice people."

"Aaahh."

There are a few other "Little Annie" jokes around the same themes. In one she throws away her crutches, and on being asked to sing and dance can only make ape-like movements. In another she has learned how to eat by herself and after much strain manages to ram her fork into her neck.

Of the jokes in standard form that Sutton-Smith published, the following were also collected in Texas: 2, 7, 19, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 43, 48, 49, 56, 57, 61, 65, 69, 70, 74, 75, 80, 88, 98, 102, 111, 114, 115, 116, 118, 120, 123, 128, 130, 135, 151, and 153. In addition the following were collected:

Category 1: The Murder of Friends and Relatives

- "How did you and daddy get along while I was gone?"
- "Oh, fine. He took me out in a rowboat every morning and let me swim back."
- "Wasn't that a little far for you to swim?"
- "Oh, no. I didn't have any trouble with that. It was just getting out of that sack." (*See Sutton-Smith #2, 3.*)
- "Daddy, what are we doing out in the middle of the lake?"
- "Shut up and get back in the sack."
- "Mommy, mommy, why is daddy so pale?"
- "Shut up and keep digging." (*See Sutton-Smith #19-24*)
- "Mommy, why is daddy swimming so fast?"
- "Shut up and reload."
- "Mother, why is daddy running across the field?"
- "Shut up and keep firing."

Category 3: Cannibalism

- "But I don't like my little sister."
- "Shut up and eat what's put in front of you."
- (*See Sutton-Smith #34*)
- "But I don't like baby sister."
- "Shut up and try catsup."

Category 4: Corpses

- "Mother, can I go play with grandpaw?"
- "Shut up, you know you've already dug him up twice this week."
- (*See Sutton-Smith #43-44*)

Category 5: Beasts

- "Mommy, mommy, what's a vampire?"
- "Shut up and drink your soup before it coagulates."
- (*See Sutton-Smith #49-51*)

Category 6: Excrement

- "Mommie, mommie, I'm in a whirlpool."
- "Shut up or I'll flush it again." (*See Sutton-Smith #53*)
- "I don't care if it does look like a Baby Ruth, put it back in the commode."

Category 8: Degenerate Parents

- "Yes, Junior, close the door and watch the little light go out."

Category 9: Afflictions, Disease, Mutilation

"Mommy, mommy, can I go swimming?"

"Shut up, you know your iron hooks would get rusty."

(See Sutton-Smith #100)

"I'm sorry Mrs. Jones, Johnny got run over today."

"That's all right just slide him under the door."

(See Sutton-Smith #85)

This boy came in with blood on his hand. He said, "Ma, you know that soft spot on the baby's head?"

"Daddy, can I go swimming with the rest of the kids?"

"Shut up, you know your iron lung won't float."

(See Sutton-Smith #88)

(kid with no legs) "Daddy, I just made a touchdown."

"O.K., kid, let's see you make the extra point."

"Mommy, everybody says I have a big head."

"Don't pay any attention to them. Just go down to the store and get 10 pounds of potatoes."

"Well give me a sack."

"Just use your hat."

"Mommy, why are we having Christmas in August this year?"

(See Sutton-Smith #91-94)

Category 10: Religion

The three wise men approached the manger with their gifts.

The manger had a low beam inside the door. The first two wise men saw the beam and ducked. The third man didn't and bumped his head. "Jesus Christ" he exclaimed. "Say Joseph," said Mary, "I like that name better than Bernard Goldfine." (See Sutton-Smith #121)

"I don't care what your story is Joseph, you'll still have to marry the girl."

"We'll have to cross his legs. We only got three nails."

(Joseph and Mary walking out of doctor's office)

"Don't worry, Mary, we'll think of something."

(scene of Last Supper) "Separate checks, please."

(scene of the Holy Family at the manger) "Mary, what are you crying like that for?"

"I wanted a girl."

"My name is Judas and I've got a secret."

"Happy Easter, Judas." (See Sutton-Smith #106)

"I don't care whose last supper it is. No I.D., no wine."

(scene of the Last Supper) "Innkeeper, that man there will pick up the check."

"I don't care if he does wear sandals and have a beard. If he can walk the water, give him a bid."

"I don't care if he is a Jew. If he can change water to wine, pledge him."

"I don't care what you say, I don't think he looks like Joseph."⁶

Category 11: Famous People

"Miss Monroe, how's your baby."

"Miss Keller, how did you like the movie?"

The latest Christmas present—a Helen Keller doll. Just wind it up and watch it walk into the wall.

Knock, knock. "Yes."

"I understand you have a baby carriage for sale, Mrs. Lindbergh."

Lumumba was given the menu on his plane trip over to the U.N.

He didn't like anything on it so he asked for the passenger list.

"Aside from that Mrs. Vukovitch, did you enjoy the race?"

Category 12: Miscellaneous

"I don't care what your name is. Get out of my bed and take that sandbag with you."

"I don't care who you are, you greasy Mexican, you can't carve Z's in my door."

"I don't care if your name is Zorro, you can't carve Z's in my T-shirt."

"I don't give a damn if your name is Tom Dooley, get out of my white oak tree."

NOTES

¹ Thompson, J 1286 "His proper title."

² Sutton-Smith, Brian, "Shut up and Keep Digging," *MF*, X (1960), 12.

³ Freud, Sigmund, "Wit and It's Relation to the Unconscious," in *The Base Writings of Sigmund Freud*, New York, 1938, p. 697.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Sutton-Smith's Number 116 ("It was the night before Christmas and Mary fell off the donkey") and number 137 ("It was the night before Christmas and Santa Claus died.") are similar to this type.

⁶ Many of the religious jokes seem to be the reaction of a logical positivist society to what they might think of as the excesses of the mystery of religion. Perhaps ultimately it is just the ultra-sweet or melodramatic religious depictions that one is constantly bombarded with that are being reacted against.

RUTH ANN MUSICK
Fairmont State College
Fairmont, West Virginia

THE MURDERED PEDLAR IN WEST VIRGINIA

IT MAY BE that there are more stories of the murdered pedlar in West Virginia than any other state—possibly because, in the early days, there were more lonely, out-of-the-way places, ideally suited for the murder and disposal of the victim. It must have taken a brave soul to have started through the mountains and wooded sections of West Virginia in the 1800's with all he possessed on his person. And, when I think of the rather large number of murders, I wonder how many pedlars, if any, were *not* killed, sooner or later, for the money, goods or tools they carried with them.

In any case West Virginia stories of murdered pedlars are numerous and strange. Some few of them seem to date back about two thousand years, or at least re-tell the same story of murder “for

gold," but all of them are supposed to have happened in West Virginia within the last hundred years, or about that. I think I have collected about thirty or more of these tales of the murdered pedlar, so far, most of which are ghost stories, but will include only eight or ten in this paper.

A BALL OF FIRE

(Contributed by Joel K. Zoeffel, as told to him by William Wease of Glenville. The story was told to him by his father.)

No one paid any attention to the familiar old gentleman as he rode towards the residence of his bachelor friend. He had been out in neighboring communities, selling his hand-made souvenirs, jewelry and rings. This was his third month in Glenville and the neighbors were used to seeing him go away one day and return a week later.

This evening he was tired, nervous, and wanted a shave, so he asked his friend to shave him. The bachelor agreed and began preparing for the task. He lathered the pedlar's face, stropped the razor, and proceeded to shave him. Knowing the pedlar carried a rather large sum of money, he formulated a plan to kill him at once. After the ordeal was over, he cut the body into several parts, which he took into the garden and buried in the hot bed. He turned the horse loose by heading it out of town and hoping it would wander far off, which it did.

The bachelor searched the pedlar's clothing and rifled the baggage, taking the money and some of the jewelry. The remainder he burned or buried. Before burying the body, he removed a ring from the pedlar's finger.

Being afraid stray dogs might smell the buried body and dig it up, he went out a couple of nights later, dug up the body, put the pieces in a sack, and went to the river late at night. Upon coming to the whirlpool, he put rocks in the sack, tied it and tossed it into the pool. In his haste he forgot to dig up the head to the body.

About five months later, a circuit judge, coming into town to hold court, rode down the road by the river. When he came within two hundred yards of the whirlpool, he saw a ball of fire above the road.

The judge could not imagine what caused the strange phenomenon; so he stopped the horse when he came to the spot where the ball of fire was. To his amazement, the ball of fire changed form and became a headless man. He got into the judge's buggy

and began relating the story of how he had met his fate. It was his desire to have the judge indict the bachelor on a charge of murder.

The judge, being afraid people would think him insane if such a case were brought before the court without a corpse or evidence, let the matter drop. He did, however, make an inquiry into the matter. The only information to come forth was that the bachelor was seen wearing the pedlar's ring, and that he had acquired about two thousand dollars several months before. No one knew the whereabouts of the pedlar or could give any information about him.

(*Note: This story seems to be fairly well known in the Glenville vicinity. Another student gives a similar account, except that the killer is convicted in the end.*)

OLD BETTS' GHOST

(Contributed by William Campbell, former student at Fairmont College.)

This is the story as related by Mr. A. B. Sharp, a retired school teacher in Lumberport. When Mr. Sharp was a young man he lived in the Little Kanawha district of Calhoun County. His grandfather told this story to him as it was told by his (the grandfather's) brother.

Colonel Betts was a farmer living near the Sharp home. The general rumor at this time was that Colonel Betts had killed a pedlar, who stopped at his house one night for lodging, and dumped his body into the river.

Mr. Sharp's grandfather's brother was the sheriff of Calhoun County, and one night as he was heading for the Sharp home darkness overtook him, so he stopped at Colonel Betts' house for lodgings.

After he had been shown a bed and gone to sleep, he was awokened by the covers sliding down to the foot of the bed. After this had happened several times, the sheriff became frightened and took his pistol from the chair where it had been lying. From that time on, he lay there with his eyes open but didn't see a thing. The covers never moved again.

Some time later the sheriff was passing the Betts' place at dusk when he saw a pedlar's wagon on the road, and, as he drew near, the pedlar took his head loose and threw it into the water. The sheriff heard the splash.

Many other people saw the pedlar and his wagon on a knoll over the river, and as they approached him, he would throw his head into the river and disappear.

THE LADY PEDLAR

(Contributed by Grace E. Moran, former student at Fairmont College)

Several years ago there was a lady pedlar who sold jewelry and did her traveling on foot. Evidently, her route was through the country between Fairmont and Morgantown. She was not particularly unusual or striking in appearance. Her hair, which was turning gray, was pulled back in a bun style, and she was five feet four inches tall.

As the story was told to me, she had five hundred dollars in cash besides her jewelry, a sum that some people considered of enough value to murder her.

On her last trip, she spent the night at the home of Elias Jones, about fifteen miles from Fairmont and two miles from where the Mt. Nebo Church now stands. It was her habit to start on her journey early in the morning, each day, and this particular morning was no exception.

This same morning, just at daybreak, a distant relative of mine, whom everyone called "Uncle Hezzy," was on his way to the mill to have corn ground. It was very early and he was more than alarmed when he heard a gun shot. Immediately, Uncle Hezzy looked for a place to hitch his horse, but he couldn't find one. He continued his journey to the mill and upon arriving, he mentioned to the men about hearing the shot. They all thought perhaps someone had been hunting.

The more Uncle Hezzy thought about the shot, the more curious he was to find out who did it and what had been shot. A few days later, he went to the spot where he had heard the shot and, to his horror, he found freshly dug earth—a spot large enough for a human to be buried.

Being so far out in the country that no law officers were readily available, he was afraid to make further investigation. The matter was dropped and nothing was thought or said about it for several years.

Will Jones, the son of Elias, had left the country shortly after the mysterious gun shot and did not return for several years. When he did come back, he was a sick man. At that time it was customary for neighbors to sit up and wait on the sick, especially when they thought anyone was possibly on his deathbed.

Uncle Hezzy was taking his turn at sitting up at the Jones house during the last night of Will's illness. Before he died, he said, "Uncle Hezzy, do you remember hearing a mysterious gun shot several years ago, on your way to the grist mill?"

Uncle Hezzy answered, "Yep, I'll always remember that."

Will went on. "Well, you're just darn lucky you couldn't find a hitching post because. . . ."

Will's father broke in here and said, "Will, you're out of your mind and don't know what you're talking about."

Will looked at his father and said, "Pa, I'm going straight to hell with my eyes wide open." And he died.

To this day, no one knows whether Will Jones killed the lady pedlar or not, but she has never been seen from that time on.

JOE DAY HOLLOW

(Contributed by Evelyn Kelly, former student at Fairmont College, as told to her by Mr. Abe Wilhelm of Cranesville, West Virginia.)

On a lonely country road near Terra Alta, between Cranesville and Brandonville Pike in Preston County is a place called Joe Day Hollow. It has been said by people living near this hollow that snow will not lie on one particular spot in that wooded vale, and they say the reason is that a man was murdered there.

Joe Day was a watch and clock pedlar and traveled over the country fixing and cleaning people's time pieces. He had a complete set of watch tinker's tools and carried them with him in a small chest. These were imported and of great value, and it is said that many people envied him his possessions.

One winter day, with the wind howling and the snow blowing and the temperature very low, Joe finished repairing watches at a farm house and started along this lonely country road. This was the last time he was ever seen, but some time later his watch tools were seen in a little shop in a village not far away.

It is believed that the old tinker was killed along this road and buried there. The spot where the snow will not lie is said to be about the size of a grave.

(Note: Miss Kelly said that Mr. Wilhelm was over ninety years of age when he told her the story.)

MURDERED PEDLAR'S GHOST

(Contributed by Mrs. Howard Glasscock of Fairmont, as told to her by her mother when she was a small child. It happened in Wetzel County, West Virginia.)

A pedlar was spending the night with a family and was sleeping upstairs. The man of the house decided he wanted the pedlar's money, so he sneaked upstairs and killed him. The pedlar was too

large for him to carry down stairs to get rid of the body, so he pulled him to the top of the steps and rolled him down.

Several years later some of my mother's relatives lived in the same house, and the blood stains were still on the stair steps. Each night around midnight, they would hear a sound like some heavy object being rolled down the steps, and the next morning the blood on the steps would look fresh.

THE MURDERED CATTLEMAN

(Contributed by Mrs. Irene Waltz, Marion County school teacher.)

In traveling from Fairmont to Rivesville, you pass a place called Hawkenberry Hollow. It was in the year 1830 that a cattle buyer was traveling from Clarksburg to Morgantown on horseback. Night came upon him, and his horse was tired from traveling for so many miles over the muddy road. He happened to see a light in a house as he passed Hawkenberry; so he decided to see if he and his horse could spend the night there. Cattle buyers were usually welcome guests as they always carried a large amount of gold in their saddlebags and paid their host well for the night's lodging.

The next morning the man of the house reported that the traveler had died during the night. His saddlebags were still under the bed in which he had slept, but the money was not there. It was always thought that he had been murdered for his gold.

MURDERED PEDLAR

(Also contributed by Mrs. Irene Waltz, Marion County teacher.)

In Norway, which is located on the east side of the West Fork River almost directly opposite Westchester, there lived a family by the name of Smith. One cold, winter evening, a pedlar stopped at their home to put up for the night. After he had retired, he was robbed of his money and murdered.

The next morning he was cut up and loaded on a sled, covered with a sheet, hauled out into the woods, and buried in a hole. When Mr. Smith was driving by a neighbor's house, the neighbor came out and asked him what he had on the sled. He told the neighbor he had butchered a beef and was taking it to market.

Now it happened that there was a girl who was working as a maid at the Smith's at that time. She became angry and quit her job a few months later, and that is how the murder story became known.

When Mr. Smith was ill, the family would not let anyone in to see him for fear, in his ravings, he might reveal something about the murder. When he died they held a private funeral for him.

(Note: The names used in this story are fictitious.)

THE UNSOLVED CRIME

(Contributed by Frances J. Tonkin, former Fairmont College Student.)

The old pedlar entered the little valley to sell his wares. He knew very little of the occupants who lived there. Perhaps if he had known, he would never have entered the hollow where Dan and Clate, two of the cruelest men in the community, lived.

It was growing dusk when the old hawker knocked on the door of the log hut. He had with him his usual wares—thread, jewelry, scarfs, and other numerous items that only the traveling pedlars sold. As was the custom of pedlars, he gave Dan and Clate odds and ends of his wares, in hopes that he might stay over night. Dan and Clate also had "something in mind" about the old pedlar's visit, and right away, made him feel welcome to spend the night.

The old hawker was never seen again. Some said that he was killed in bed; others said that he was fooled outdoors, and then shot and buried in the woods. No one could ever prove either of these stories. However, it was said that the wares were buried in the floor of the barn shed and the hogs rooted several articles out later.

Thus another crime of Dan and Clate went unsolved.

THE MURDERED MERCHANT'S GHOST

(Contributed by Mrs. Gertrude Newlon, former student in my folk-literature class at Fairmont State College.)

In a rural section of Wirt County, before the Civil War, a merchant was traveling toward home after his day's work, when he was robbed—his head completely severed from his body by a shotgun blast at close range—and his horses and wagon tied to a tree.

The Low Gap, as the place was called, where the merchant was killed, immediately became a place of horror for night travelers. The "ghost" that appeared when people passed the place took on various forms.

According to one traveler, as he approached the spot, a very large, dog-like animal, or form, was lying in the road. He became frightened and yelled at the animal, but it did not move. He then picked up a stone and threw at it. Immediately, the animal arose and floated through the air down over the Low Gap and disappeared.

Two men, who were passing the place by night, told of a large ball of fire that came down the hill, touching the tree tops and making a hissing sound. It crossed the highway and it too disappeared over the Low Gap.

On another night a traveler was walking along the highway when he saw what appeared to be a man coming toward him, carrying a lantern. Just as the man got almost to him, the lantern's light vanished. The traveler, who was almost too frightened to talk, said, "What's the matter? Did your light go out?" A coarse, ghostly voice slowly replied, "No, my life went out." Immediately a white, ghost-like form arose from the spot where the lantern was last seen, and floated in the air to vanish over the Low Gap.

A prominent jeweler, who did not believe any of the stories he had heard about the merchant's ghost, decided to prove his disbelief by walking by the place alone one dark night. When he came back to his friends, they noticed he was very pale and did not care to talk. Upon being questioned, however he told of seeing a headless man as he approached the place. When he got almost to the form, it crossed the highway and started floating through the air till it, too, vanished over the Low Gap.

Everyone also knew the story of the lone pedestrian, who upon approaching the "haunted" place, heard weird screams. When he directed a light in the direction of the sound, he saw a nude man with blood on his face running wildly to the usual spot. Following the same course as the other forms, he too vanished and the screaming stopped just as abruptly.

These stories have been handed down and many who know them still get the "jitters" when they pass the Low Gap at night.

THE DEATH OF A SALESMAN (Cattleman)

(Contributed by Franklin D. Shaffer, former student of Fairmont College, as told to him by his mother. The story was told to her by her mother, who in turn heard it from her brother.)

This incident happened during the latter part of the 19th century in Grant County, West Virginia. During this time there were a great number of traveling salesmen and most of them carried large sums of money. Many of them were robbed and killed for their money. Because of these murders, the salesmen tried to travel in pairs, as a safety precaution. They tried to stay the night at two different places. The purpose of this was so they could check on each other the next morning, and if anything had happened to either of them, the other could report it to the authorities.

Late one evening two salesmen stopped at an inn. One of them was a cattleman and the other was a pedlar. The cattleman stayed at the inn and the pedlar went to the nearest farmhouse to stay for the night. The next morning the pedlar went to the inn and asked the keeper if the cattleman was up and about yet. When the inn keeper told the pedlar that he did not know anything about the cattleman, the pedlar was sure that something had happened to him during the night. In fact he was almost sure that the cattleman had been killed; so he reported the incident to the authorities, but when the investigation was made, nothing could be proved against the inn-keeper, and he was free of the charge.

Within the next few years the inn-keeper became very ill. In fact, he was so ill that he was more dead than alive. He was in this condition for a long time, and it seemed as if he just kept hanging on to what little life was left in him. One day when the doctor came to see him, he told him that he wanted to make a confession. He told the doctor about the night the cattleman had stayed at his inn. He said, during the night while the cattleman was sleeping, he sneaked into his room and stabbed him to death and then dragged him outside and threw him over a rock cliff. He said he had hoped to rob him of a large sum of money, but he only had one dollar on him at the time. As soon as the innkeeper made his confession, he died.

A couple of years later my great uncle, having a job close by, stayed at this same inn. He had a room next to the one where the cattleman had been murdered. He said that every night around nine o'clock he would hear a noise. It sounded like someone dragging a bag of feed out of the bed; after it hit the floor it would be dragged out to the top of the stairs. One night he decided he would go out in the hall and see what it was. As soon as he went into the hall, the noise stopped and he did not see anything. Having a strange thing like this happened to him, he did not stay there after that night.

All the people who lived close around there, said the place was haunted. Finally the owner left the place and it burned down. Even after the inn burned down, people used to come from far and near to hear the strange noises.

(Note: Barring the dream element, this story seems to be a version of part of Chaucer's "Nun's Priest's Tale," the part where the two fellows were traveling together and stayed in separate places for the night, during which one of them was murdered "for his gold" and thrown in a dung cart.)

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